

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
USUN NEW YORK 2927

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6975

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PGOV PDEV NI
SUBJECT: THE CA: IT'S ALL OVER

REF: A) KADUNA 673
B) LAGOS 5705

BEGIN SUMMARY: CA CHAIRMAN UDOMA HAS DECLARED THAT THE
ASSEMBLY HAS FINISHED ITS WORK AND HAS ADJOURNED IT
SINE DIE. END SUMMARY

1. ON JUNE 5, CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA) CHAIRMAN UDO
UDOMA DECLARED THAT THE ASSEMBLY HAD COMPLETED ITS
CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND ABRUPTLY
ADJOURNED THE CA SINE DIE. IN TAKING THE ACTION, UDOMA
ANNOUNCED TO THE ASSEMBLY THAT NOT ONLY THE SECOND
READING BUT THE THIRD READING OF THE BILL HAD BEEN
COMPLETED. EACH MEMBER WAS GIVEN A PAMPHLET CONTAINING
THE DECISIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND WAS REQUESTED TO
CROSS CHECK THE RESULTS WITH HIS OWN NOTES AND
UNDERSTANDINGS. ANY DISCREPANCIES WERE TO BE REPORTED
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TO THE SECRETARIAT WHICH WAS IN THE PROCESS OF PRO-
DUCING A FINAL TEXT.

2. UDOMA ACTED IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING EFFORTS BY
SOME MCAS TO REOPEN THE QUESTION OF CREATING NEW
STATES. THE CHAIRMAN HAD DECLARED LAST THURSDAY THAT
THE CA COULD NOT CONSIDER THE ISSUE FURTHER AS THE FMG

HAD STATED THERE WOULD BE NO MORE NEW STATES ESTABLISHED BEFORE 1979, MOST MCAS WHO SPOKE WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ADJOURNMENT AGREED WITH UDOMA'S RULING; HOWEVER, PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT LATER IN THE DAY, 80 TO 100 MCAS SIGNED A STATEMENT DESCRIBING UDOMA'S "JUMP" TO THE THIRD READING AS HIGH-HANDED AND UNDEMOCRATIC. THE SIGNERS, WHO INCLUDED NORTHERN POLITICAL HEAVYWEIGHTS SUCH AS ADAMU CIROMA, NUHU BAMALI, PROFESSOR IYA ABUBAKER, SHEHU SHEGARI, AND ALI MUNGUNO, RESOLVED TO CONTINUE " THE SECOND READING BEFORE REACHING THE THIRD READING OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION BILL."

3. VIEWS ARE MIXED AS TO WHETHER THE ASSEMBLY WILL BE RECONVENED IN THE FUTURE. SEVERAL MCAS FELT THE ASSEMBLY WOULD BE RECALLED IN TWO TO THREE WEEKS TO APPROVE A FINAL VERSION OF THE CONSTITUTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, PRESS REPORTS SPECULATE THAT UNLESS UDOMA DECIDED TO CALL A MEETING TO DEAL WITH TEXT DISCREPANCIES AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, THE CA HAS BEEN ADJOURNED FOR THE LAST TIME.

4. COMMENT: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT UDOMA ACTED TO HEAD OFF ANOTHER SHARIA CONFRONTATION; HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO AN EASTERN LEADER HILARY NJOKU (IMO), THE NORTHERNERS HAD CAUCUSED OVER THE WEEKEND (REF A) AND HAD DETERMINED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH VOTES TO WIN A FLOOR FIGHT ON THE ISSUE. THEREFORE, THEY DECIDED TO LET IT DROP. MCA JOHN R. CHAWANG (PLATEAU), A MIDDLE BELT OPPONENT OF SHARIA, TOLD US THAT THE NORTHERNERS HAD LOBBIED HARD LAST WEEK TO GAIN MORE SUPPORT FOR THEIR POSITION AND HAD FAILED. "IT JUST FIZZLED OUT." SIMILARLY, PRO-SHARIA MIDDLE BELTER ALAJI ABDULLAHI ADAMU (PLATEAU) TOLD US THAT THERE HAD SIMPLY BEEN NO MOVEMENT IN THE ASSEMBLY ON THE ISSUE SINCE THE LAST CONFRONTATION.

5. IT IS HOWEVER, IMAGINABLE THAT UDOMA CUT OFF THE NEW STATES DEBATE FOR FEAR THAT IT MIGHT INTURN LEAD, ON A QUID PRO QUO BASIS, TO A REOPENING OF THE SHARIA QUESTIN. WHILE MOST OF THE NEW STATE MOVEMENT ARE IN THE SOUTH, WE NOTE THE NUMBER OF NORTHERN LEADERS WHO SIGNED THE STATEMENT TO CONTINUE THE DEBATE. HOWEVER, MCA RUFUS OLUMBA IMO TOLD US THAT AS OF LAST WEEK WHEN THE NEW STATE QUESTION REEMERGED, NORTHERNERS HAD MADE NO CONCRETE EFFORTS TO LINK SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF PARTICULAR NEW STATES TO SUPPORT ON SHARIA.

6. IT IS MORE LIKELY, IN OUR VIEW, THAT UDOMA'S
DECISION TO GUILLOTINE THE ASSEMBLY WAS SIMPLY BASED ON HIS
ASSESSMENT THAT THE WORK INDEED WAS COMPLETED AND IT
WAS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT HYPERACTIVE MCAS WOULD BEGIN
TO REOPEN PANDORA'S BOXES, WHICH CONTAIN PROBLEMS SUCH
AS THE STATE ISSUE.
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